

JUNIOR YEAR IN FRANCE

Upon my recommendation, Bennington College has decided to discontinue its Junior Year Program in Lyons. This quite regrettable decision was made necessary by the following circumstances:

1. In order to provide a curriculum more or less equivalent to that of Bennington College, at least 4 to 6 regular instructors had to be involved in the Lyons program. On the other hand, it was obvious that the direct enrolment of prospective students at Bennington College would never justify such a staff. Consequently, continuance of this program depended upon its being open to outside candidates. This solution, however, raised administrative problems which couldn't be solved.

2. In spite of the flexible organization of the Lyons program, I discovered that certain students were still not able to adjust satisfactorily to the French system of higher education. This was perhaps due to our having to take as many students as possible regardless of their real qualifications for an educational experience of this type. Even under the most favorable circumstances the differences between the French and American cycles of studies are difficult to adjust.

For the academic year 1968-1969, I have the opportunity to send 2 or 3 students to a group called "L'Academie", located in Paris. However, this will be only on an experimental basis.

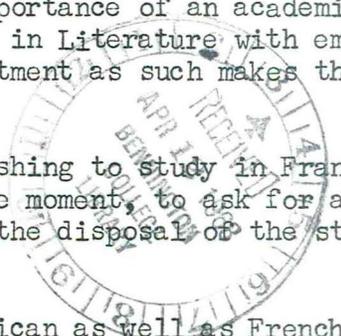
"L'Academie" offers a remarkable series of courses taught by the greatest specialists in each field: Mr. Michel Foucault in Philosophy; Mr. G. Schmeltz in Sociology; Mr. Roland Barthes and Mr. Gaëtan Picon in French Literature; Mr. Jacques Filliolet in Linguistics; Mr. Jean-Louis Ferrier and Mr. Pierre Francastel in History of Art; Mr. Jean Duvignaud, Mr. Jean-Louis Barrault, and Mr. Maurice Bejart in History of the Theatre. The courses of "L'Academie" are predominantly designed for Literature and Art History students, though this organization offers lectures on scientific matters by the highest authorities: Mr. Claude Levi-Strauss, Mr. Louis Armand, Claude Rostand, etc.

The exceptional nature of "L'Academie" program requires a limited number of particularly qualified students: 20 at most. Next year, they will come from Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Bryn Mawr, Wellesley...and Bennington. Furthermore, "L'Academie" will accept candidates from Bennington College only upon my personal recommendation. In other words, interesting as this program is, it does not in any way solve the problem of a Bennington type of Junior Year Abroad.

I personally would like to stress once more the importance of an academic year abroad for any Bennington student wishing to major in Literature with emphasis on French. The fact that we do not have a French department as such makes this almost mandatory.

Yet I would say that for the Bennington student wishing to study in France during one or two semesters the best solution is, at the moment, to ask for a term's or a year's leave of absence. I shall place at the disposal of the student all necessary information concerning:

a. all existing Junior Year Abroad programs (American as well as French) which could eventually be regarded as creditable.



b. those programs which would not be acceptable at all, for example, the "Cours pour les Étrangers," the "Institut Franco-Britannique," etc.

Such a solution means practically that the student herself would be responsible for organizing her own program of studies in France, but that she would do so without any engagement on the part of Bennington College.

Although I consider this state of affairs most unfortunate, I fail to see how in the best interests of the students themselves as well as in the interest of the College it could be resolved otherwise.

Georges Guy

Bennington College
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